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Thalé san became more and more scarce. At first, no matter how much was eaten, at night the portion which had been cut during the day reappeared; but when the first people fell into the sin of lust the rice gradually vanished. Where the rice was cut in the morning, there remained a bare patch at night. Since then man has had to labour, and earn his bread with the sweat of his brow.

Owing to the scarcity, crime first appeared in the world. One man, fearing that his stock would not last him, went and stole from his neighbours' barns. Thus theft was the first crime committed in the world. The man whose rice was stolen at first only scolded the thief, and let him go. The robber, however, did not care for this, and came back a second and a third time. The third time he was seized and beaten. Thus out of the original crime of thievery arose abuse, reviling, assault, falsehood, and then punishments. In this way did crime and consequently law and justice take their origin, and have lasted since the very beginning of the world. Hitherto on account of the happy state in which the people had lived, without crime and without punishments, every one had been equal, and there had been no necessity for marking different grades. As, however, crime increased, and with it revenge, more or less sweeping according to temperament, the people took counsel together and resolved to appoint a man to be ruler over them, who should regulate their affairs and punish wrongdoers. Thus a king was first appointed, and his revenue was derived from tithes given by the people. Each man set apart a tenth of his Thalé san for the support of the king. The tithe system was kept up among the Burmese, the most direct in descent from the original people, until a few years ago. The kings extended the system. The rulers and governors of provinces received in place of salary the tithes of the districts which were under their charge. But King Mindôn Min, finding that with unscrupulous men the method was liable to abuse, abolished the system of tithes, and introduced the English method of paying a regular salary. It did not, however, work well. Many of the myo-sas, finding that they did not receive their money regularly from the State, continued to exact tithes as before, only secretly and with many cunning devices to hide

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what they were doing. It is probable, therefore, that the custom of the ancients would have been reintroduced.

The appointment of a ruler to punish crime was therefore the second source of the law, and the first source of the administration of justice. The first king chosen was a Payālaung, a person destined in future ages to be a Buddha, and therefore of great sanctity and wisdom, and one who strictly conformed to the five natural and religious laws incumbent on all men, namely, not to murder, steal, commit adultery, drink fermented liquors, or speak falsely. From these immediately sprang the four thingahas or kingly laws, and the first laws laid down by the Payālaung were with regard to the twenty-five descriptions of theft, the ten kinds of assault, and the twenty-seven kinds of abusive language.

Notwithstanding the institution of a source of administrative justice, crime continued to increase, and those who wished to escape from its evil influences retired to the jungles and there built small houses for themselves, or gained a living by begging from village to village. Thus rose the caste of the Brahmins. Those who built themselves houses and acquired wealth by agriculture and trade, were called thaté thu-gywè, rich men, while those who were unfortunate and oppressed sank into the state of poverty and were called thu sinyè. Thus arose the legal classification of the people.

The first king, Mahāthamada as he was called, probably had a written code, but it has been superseded or lost. The laws which now guide us were drawn up by Menu, originally a cowherd, but afterwards a minister. To these laws all others owe their existence, for we read that in Greece, the earliest civilised country in Europe, Menu was styled Minos in Crete, and first gave them laws. In this way polity was established in the Southern Island. The original people soon greatly increased, and multiplied, and dispersed themselves not only all over the mainland, but some even went to the smaller islands round about, as did the English to the Pyi Gyi. Just as the children of one father take different names, so the different peoples took to themselves different titles, according to the part of the earth they settled in. Just also as some children in a family are good and some bad, so a few races preserved the sacred law of

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the Lord Buddha, and some fell away into lamentable heresies. Many of them still retain reminiscences of the teachings of the Great Master. Thus the Bible of the Christian contains moral precepts in a great measure identical with the sentiments conveyed in the thoughts or sermons of the Lord Buddha. There is even confirmation in the mention of the ages of Methuselah and other men of old, of the doctrine of the waxing and waning term of human life. Some learned Sadaws have held that the Lord Jesus is Dewadat, the cousin of Shin Gautama, who was always trying to overthrow the good works of the Buddha; and it is well known that the Siamese speak of the evil Dewadat as the God of Europe, and the causer of all the evil in the world. This opinion is not, however, generally held, and the best thing a Burman can wish for a good Englishman is that in some future existence, as a reward of good works, he may be born a Buddhist and if possible a Burman. For that the Burmese are most nearly descended
[103] from the original holy people, their name Byammā or Bamā evidently shows, while no other nation preserves the sacred law more carefully and more exactly in its form as it came from the lips of the Lord Buddha himself. Moreover, the Burmese monarchs retained the titles given to Mahāthamada, the first king, and his immediate successors, and therefore they ranked above all others.